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musings upon a copperfield

by darubyprincxx

Summary

Pix takes a quiet evening to work on David 5.0 after the rush and rumble of the past few months. He finds himself reflecting on past times.

Or,

A rare moment of calm on the Hermitcraft server.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

Nestled deep within a corner of the earth, through rough-hewn hallways latticed with holes and torches, a complex and yet somehow familiar machine sat patiently in a cavernous room that had been hollowed out just for this purpose. Lines of caution tape ran neatly across it, and although half-built in its current state, it had the makings of something truly incredible: not for its size and ingenuity, although it was indeed quite large and designed with practiced skill. No, it was the careful detail of which this particular machine was built which made it stand out amongst the rest of the contraptions that lined the halls of this residence.

Through the circuits and bones of this strange thing a man walked, slow and relaxed, weaving through the rows to brush a hand over a repeater, a thumb to tweak a comparator into its place. He moved with the gentle and confident grace of a man truly in his element, and in his element he was, for this man had designed and indeed built this machine.

It was a quiet evening on the Hermitcraft server, and Pix had taken hold of the time to take a few hours and work on what he and Xisuma had been slowly but surely raising way down here in the

stone-cold flesh of the earth.

Xisuma himself was busy helping one of the other Hermits with a project, perhaps Joe with her pinball machine, and so Pix had the room all to himself. He enjoyed the solitude, one earbud hanging stubbornly from his left ear, letting his mind wander gently as he made sure everything was in place.

Quiet moments like this, after all, were few and far between in a life like this. And while he had enjoyed the chaos and noise of Empires, he'd found himself quietly yearning more and more for something a little bit like this lately: a minute to let his soul settle gently back into his body, a minute to do something he knew how to do.

Pix knew these places well, knew the people who wandered their roads perhaps even better. Through the blistering dry heat of savanna summers and the unrelenting rain of wet autumns, they'd been a constant presence: swinging by with familiar and endearing momentum, asking for little favors or supplies or perhaps even bringing some of their own. He'd laughed with them, yelled in joy and patted their back as they sat glumly after particularly rough defeats.

But although this was a fiercely friendly group he ran the gauntlet of seasons and years alongside, they could also be a little bit tiring sometimes. Pix did not mean that in a mean way. He just got worn out a little sometimes, like everyone does from time to time.

With a soundless sigh, he climbed carefully up the wireframe of the mechanism and walked across the glass walkway hoisting a torch high above his head as he went, looking for things out of place and little mistakes to be fixed.

As he went about, carefully and meticulously checking each dispenser and each timing, he let himself rest in the peace and calm that enveloped him, let his muscles truly relax. Tweaking repeater timings and testing the stickiness of pistons with one finger, each action careful and filled with a quiet sort of love, a priest from another time and another world could have argued that was this not worship? Was this not holy? Was this not prayer?

Pixl did not have any particular views on religion, well, not ones that he shared publicly anyways. He was just one man in a multiplex of worlds woven together chaotically in a universe that was as strange as it was beautiful. He was well aware of this, and in fact was quite alright with it.

Ah. He'd missed a line of redstone there. He replaced it and continued down, much like a bee down a row of flowers did.

The machine's name was David, a continuation of a pun on a copper field built years ago. (Pix was fond of puns, and fond of David.) This was its fifth permutation, and its job was simple: store freshly minted copper blocks, detect when they were fully encrusted with a gentle blue bastardization of oxygen, and return them to their places to be mined and stored for later use.

Xisuma had requested a version to be built inside his base with his assistance in actually constructing the thing, and of course Pix gratefully accepted the offer. The man was a cheerful companion as well as a good working partner in general, and the two sometimes swapped tales during a break over a cup of something warm, though they more often worked in silence.

This being Pixl's fourth time improving upon and rebuilding this idea of machine, the detail work was practically muscle memory at this point. If he tried, he could probably do this in his sleep, although he was indeed planning on getting some rest soon, as it was getting late.

This time of night, his mind was wandering gently around the great web of places he'd been and the

people he knew. He was fondly carding through memories while his hands worked almost of their own volition, a small smile on his face.

These particular memories were worn around the edges from being brushed over and replayed so many times, but he had good reason to do so. These moments were tinted a warm yellow, a familiar and comforting warmth to them, soft like a favorite hoodie or a fond smile towards one you care for most.

Their contents were varied, but most of them were well-kept relics of quiet moments like these: tending to the froglights in the orchard, the scratch of a pen against paper in the evenings, the sound of rain pattering gently on the roof. Quiet laughter and chatter in a room shared with friends, sideways and messy but in a homegrown kind of way, natural grins and tousled hair and repressed giggles all around.

Suffice it to say that these places were where Pix had felt the most at home, the most at place in the air he breathed, the littler things that kept him grounded amongst the chaos of the rest of time.

He rested in the familiarity and the warm affection of the love stored in these places, both given by and received by him, and ever-so-slightly humorously added this, the crux of the past few hours spent completely at ease, to the list.

His phone buzzed once gently in his pocket, a message or perhaps a reminder, and he paused a minute as he checked it. Ah, right. Fifteen minutes 'til twelve. It really was getting late, but he didn't mind all that much.

With a stretch towards the ceiling and a small yawn, he set his pickaxe over one shoulder and roughly tossed a shulker box into his arm with the help of one foot as he strode back towards the main area of Xisuma's base. He'd chosen a small, out-of-the-way area in X's storage room to set his bed down until he had a little place of his own. (Little it would have to be, for he knew he and the rest of the Emperors wouldn't be here long. That was simply how these things went.)

The room was softly lit by a complex of lanterns hung low from the center of the ceiling, and in the corner he'd chosen the light faded out to a gentle golden-orange glow. Items ticked along quietly amongst the chests, and water trickled in the background. Somehow, Pix knew he wouldn't have any trouble whatsoever getting to sleep tonight.

With a sigh and yet another yawn, he dropped his pickaxe and the shulker box besides his bed and drew the blankets over himself. He'd made good progress today, and he and X would most likely be done sometime within the week.

His last amused thought before his mind drifted off into a gentle golden contentment was that no matter how bizarre the events that had landed him here in this moment, they were all worth it for this feeling alone.

End Notes

this one is very much a love letter to canon since empires smp- and the hc x esmp crossover in general- have my whole heart. also i was in a cosy mood and wanted to write something reflecting that so behold! one eep-fueled oneshot! enjoy :]

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